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IN-COUNTRY EXPERIENCE: NAVY PERSONNEL STATIONED IN  
GREECE(U) NAVY PERSONNEL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
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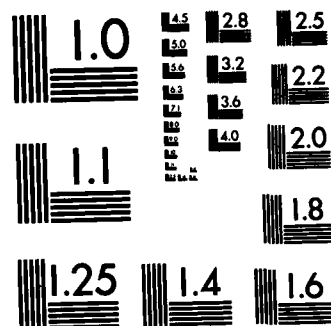
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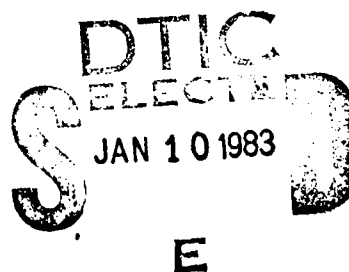


SPECIAL REPORT

February 1973

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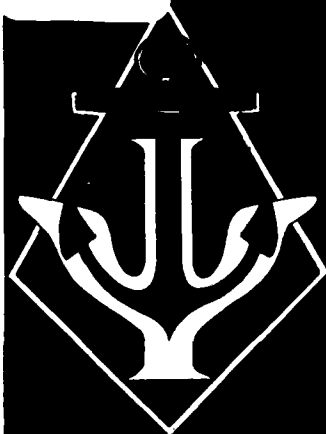
NAVY PERSONNEL STATIONED IN GREECE



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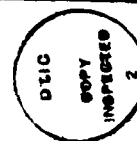
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NAVAL PERSONNEL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

20374

A LABORATORY OF THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL



## FOREWORD

Appreciation is expressed for the cooperation and assistance received from the Naval Communication Station command located in Nea Makri, Greece and to the Navymen who participated in this study.

## SUMMARY

### Problem

As one of the most highly visible American world travelers, the United States Navy must carry forward the dual responsibility of maintaining its combat effectiveness while serving as international ambassador of good will. The potential problem areas arising from this dual responsibility include both the high monetary cost of error in selection and the lowered morale and productivity of personnel dissatisfied with their overseas assignment.

### Background and Requirements

In order to improve the selection of Naval personnel for overseas assignment, the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-Pc) requested the Naval Personnel Research and Development Laboratory to develop screening and selection procedures for overseas duty.

### Approach

The first step in the development of a selection procedure required the identification of those personal attributes that maximize positive interaction between Naval personnel and host-country nationals. Information on actual in-country experience was obtained through questionnaires and in-depth individual face-to-face interviews with officer and enlisted personnel stationed at the Naval Communication Station, Nea Makri, Greece.

### Findings

A positive relationship was revealed between the facility to speak some Greek and both the amount of actual social interaction with Greek people and the degree of satisfaction with living in Greece.

When questioned about the specifics of living in Greece, almost all of the Navymen stated that they used the military exchange as the primary source for shopping. However, most indicated that they were dissatisfied with the quality, quantity and availability of food, clothing and general merchandise.

Of the individually interviewed Navymen who had school-age children, most were critical of the American community school. Less-than-desirable quality of education and lack of administrative control over discipline were the primary complaints.

The most frequently mentioned problems that the Navymen encountered in adjusting to life in Greece were: undisciplined Greek driving habits,

lack of communication because of language barrier, and housing conditions which include finding housing, dealing with landlords and the unpredictable service from public utilities. Other frequently mentioned difficulties for Americans to adjust to were: Greek rudeness in public and the different style of daily living which includes an afternoon siesta.

When questioned about what things the Navymen thought Americans do that the Greek people have the greatest difficulty adjusting to, the list included: lack of respect for Greek social customs, acting superior, spending a lot of money, drinking too much in public, and making disparaging remarks about and to Greeks.

The more prominent positive qualities mentioned by the Navymen as the most critical personal characteristics contributing to successful homeporting in Greece were: friendliness, interest in cultural matters and language, adaptability, family stability, maturity, even-tempered personality, and flexibility.

Traits or conditions mentioned most frequently as contributing to poor adjustment to homeporting in Greece were: impatience, intolerance, marital instability, and heavy drinking accompanied by physically aggressive behavior.

When giving their impressions of the type of treatment Americans received from the Greeks, the respondents' views reflected no clearcut trend. They were about evenly divided on the question "Do you think American military personnel are treated any differently from non-military Americans in Greece?" About half thought that non-military Americans were better treated by Greeks; the other half thought military Americans were the better treated.

To help better prepare Americans for homeporting assignment to Greece, the major recommendations given by the respondents currently living in Greece were: provide more information about Greek customs and culture with particulars concerning housing and dealings related to everyday living, and require and provide training in commonly spoken Greek language.

### Recommendations

Rather than provide the traditional method of simply furnishing information, a different approach to cultural indoctrination and training is needed. It appears desirable to provide Navymen and their families with some situational experience prior to their actually being confronted with the real overseas situation. Such experience should be offered in indoctrination and training sessions which would simulate various representative and frequently encountered conditions in the trainees' prospective overseas location. In addition, the participant would also be exposed to, and would use, enough of the basic day-to-day host-country spoken language to enable him to communicate with minimum adequacy in his interactions with host-country nationals.

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## INTRODUCTION

"I wish to re-emphasize to all Naval personnel that positive overseas diplomacy, as a mission element, is one of our major tasks.

(It is important to pursue)"...an on-going action program which will ensure that units are in fact operating as a positive and effective instrument of U. S. foreign policy." (And which will ensure) "...that individual Navymen and women (and their families) are able to live and work productively and with satisfaction in an overseas environment."

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.<sup>1</sup>

### A. Problem

The Navy is increasing the number of fleet units being homeported in overseas areas. As more and more Navymen and their families are deployed overseas under this policy, their impact on the Navy's operational effectiveness and on the quality of American representation abroad increases. Correspondingly, the potential for problems, arising from failure to make a satisfactory adjustment to overseas settings, multiplies and becomes increasingly costly. In addition to the direct financial outlay incurred by transporting Navy personnel and their families to and from distant foreign locations, there are the less apparent tolls of lowered morale, lowered work productivity and corrosive interpersonal relationships that carry with them the possibility of reducing operational effectiveness. Also of paramount importance is the potential for damaging the American image abroad at a time when increased contact between peoples of different nations takes place in an atmosphere of heightened international tensions.

### B. Objective

— The overall objective of this project is to develop an assessment procedure to evaluate Navy personnel for their potential for making a satisfactory adjustment to a homeporting assignment to Greece. The purpose of this report is to present the finding of one part of the project: namely, the identification of the personal attributes which contribute to successful and unsuccessful adjustment to living and working in Greece. ←

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<sup>1</sup>NAVOP (Z-104) 010030Z JAN 72 - "THE NAVY MISSION AND OVERSEAS DIPLOMACY."

## APPROACH

The study was conducted in two phases. The purpose of the first phase was to identify the personal attributes which individuals and their families need to make a satisfactory adjustment to living and working in Greece. There were two parts to this phase. The first part consisted of gathering and analyzing the experiences of American Navy people stationed in Greece -- with which this reports deals. The second part of the first phase consisted of the analysis of observations and experiences of Greeks in their dealings with American Navy personnel stationed in Greece -- which will be presented in a separate report. The focus of the analyses of both bodies of information concerned the isolation and description of elements contributing to two distinctly different outcomes: notable satisfactory homeporting experience, and demonstrably unsatisfactory homeporting experience.

The development of a homeporting selection procedure will be based on the analysis of information collected in the two parts of the first phase. The second phase will result in an assessment procedure to be used by detailers at the Bureau of Naval Personnel for screening and selection of personnel for homeporting assignments. Simultaneously, the first-phase data analyses will provide an information resource for the enhancement of indoctrination and training programs designed to prepare Navy personnel for their anticipated homeporting assignments.

### A. Data Collection

During the month of August 1972, research psychologists conducted interviews with personnel stationed at the Naval Communication Station at Nea Makri, Greece. In face-to-face contacts, fifty-four officers and enlisted men were questioned concerning their reactions to the adjustments and problems of living in Greece. To gather further information, questionnaires were distributed to additional personnel, requesting them to write their impressions and experiences while being stationed in Greece. With noted exceptions, the interview schedule and the questionnaire contained the following questions:

1. Of the many problems and adjustments that Americans encounter during their assignment to Greece, in your opinion which are the most difficult ones that a Navyman and his family must deal with? (Not contained in interview schedule)
2. What do Greeks do that most Americans have the greatest difficulty adjusting to?

3. What sort of thing do Americans do that irritate Greeks and create a bad image of Americans?
4. Can you think of anything else that hurts smooth relations with the Greeks?
5. Think of American Navy personnel who seem to be at home in Greece, and who also seem to be accepted as friends by the Greeks.

What personal characteristics or traits do these Navy personnel have that enable them to get along so well with the Greeks?

6. In your opinion, what are the most critical personal characteristics to look for in selecting an individual/family for home-porting assignment to Greece?
7. What type of person/family would you not recommend for assignment to Greece?
8. Do you think American military personnel are treated any differently from non-military Americans in Greece?
9. What could the Navy do to help better prepare Americans for assignment to Greece?
10. Please feel free to make any additional comments or suggestions that you feel would improve the selection and indoctrination program.

In addition to the items contained in the written questionnaire, the face-to-face interview schedule included questions in the following areas: speaking facility in Greek language; amount of social interaction with Greek people; degree of satisfaction with living in Greece; wife's satisfaction with living in Greece; Navyman's opinion concerning shopping in the American commissary and Greek market; and the quality of the American sponsored schools.

#### B. Respondent Characteristics

Summarized in Table 1 is the composition of the personnel who participated in both aspects of this study, including the length of time they were stationed in Greece and their marital status. Marital status was obtained only on the Navyman who were individually interviewed.

TABLE 1

## RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Respondents			
<u>Composition</u>	<u>Face-to-Face</u>	<u>Written</u>	<u>Total</u>
Officers	4*	3	7
Enlisted	50	25	75
Total	54	28	82

<u>Time Stationed in Greece</u>	<u>All Respondents</u>	<u>Percent</u>
less than 6 months	6	7
7 months to 1 yr	27	33
1 yr to 2 yrs	36	44
more than 2 yrs	13	16
Total	82	100%

<u>Marital Status**</u>		
married	33	61
single	21	39
Total	54	100%

\*Headquarters staff officers are not included here since interviews with them were conducted in an informal, exploratory manner.

\*\*Marital status was obtained only on the Navymen interviewed.

### C. Data Analysis and Presentation

The responses to the questions in the face-to-face interviews are analyzed separately from the responses to the written open-ended questionnaires. The information obtained from the questions common to both the face-to-face schedule and the written questionnaire were content analyzed, tallied according to response patterns and are recorded here in the form of the percentage equivalents of frequency distributions. Direct quotations, excerpted from both oral and written responses, are used here to exemplify the more typical responses given by both groups of respondents.

## FINDINGS

### A. Language Facility

The percentages presented in Table 2 indicated that the majority (60%) of the Navymen interviewed could not speak the Greek language. For the purpose of this study, facility with the language was loosely defined as the ability to communicate in Greek with very minimal proficiency (a few words or phrases). In this connection it is interesting to note that 93 percent of the individuals participating in the study had been stationed in Greece for at least 6 months.

A positive relationship was revealed between the facility to speak some Greek and both the amount of actual social interaction with Greek people and the degree of satisfaction with living in Greece. Almost half (46%) of the Navymen stated that they have some social interaction with the Greek people as reflected in Table 2. Not surprisingly, the individuals indicating social interaction were those that have some Greek speaking ability. As can be seen, the majority of those able to speak Greek also indicated some social interaction (90%) and conversely 84 percent of those without a speaking facility indicated no social interaction.

As indicated in Table 3, 54 percent of the Navymen interviewed answered that, taking everything into consideration, they were satisfied with living in Greece. Of the Navymen who could speak some Greek, 86 percent indicated satisfaction whereas 68 percent of the non-Greek speaking Navymen expressed dissatisfaction.

TABLE 2

RELATION BETWEEN SPEAKING FACILITY  
AND SOCIAL INTERACTION  
WITH HOST-COUNTRY NATIONALS  
(N = 52)

Social Interaction	<u>Speaking Facility</u> Percents		Column %
	None	Some	
Some	16	90	46
None	84	10	54
Column Totals	100	100	100
Row %	60	40	

TABLE 3

RELATION BETWEEN SPEAKING FACILITY  
AND SATISFACTION  
WITH LIVING IN GREECE  
(N = 52)

Husband's Satisfaction In Greece	<u>Speaking Facility</u> Percents		Column %
	None	Some	
Yes	32	86	54
No	68	14	46
Column Totals	100	100	100
Row %	60	40	

Table 4 deals with the satisfaction of the Navy wives living in Greece and its relationship to the husband's Greek speaking ability. Fifty-nine percent of the married men indicated that their wives did not like living in Greece, or, for some reason were ready to go back to the States. Although wife's ability to speak Greek was not obtained, 67 percent of the wives of non-Greek speaking Navymen expressed dissatisfaction with Greece. In other words, the wife's dissatisfaction with living in Greece seems to correspond to her husband's inability to speak Greek which in turn corresponds to the amount of social interaction the Navyman and his family have with Greeks (Table 2).

The reverse, however, does not necessarily appear true. That is, only 50 percent of the wives whose husbands could speak the language were satisfied with living in Greece. Referring to Table 2, it is noted that 16 percent of the Navymen indicated that although they do not speak any Greek, they do interact socially with the Greek people. Either these wives can speak Greek or the Greeks communicate in English with these Navy families.

TABLE 4

RELATION BETWEEN HUSBAND'S SPEAKING  
FACILITY AND WIFE'S SATISFACTION  
WITH LIVING IN GREECE  
(N = 32)

Wife's Satisfaction in Greece	Speaking Facility		Column %
	No	Yes	
Yes	33	50	41
No	67	50	59
Column Totals	100	100	100
Row %	56	44	

Comparing the wives' satisfaction as expressed by their husbands and the Navymen's satisfaction as a group, single and married, more wives were dissatisfied (59%, Table 4) with living in Greece than men (46%, Table 3). Since husbands answered for their wives, a comparison revealed a 65 percent agreement. That is, about 7 out of 10 husbands who said they were either satisfied or dissatisfied answered the same for their wives. The remaining 35 percent of the disagreement was about equally split between husbands being satisfied and the wives dissatisfied and visa versa.



#### B. Shopping

Although almost all the Navymen interviewed stated that they use the military exchange as the primary source for shopping, most indicated that they were dissatisfied with the quality, quantity, and availability of food, clothing and general merchandise. Comments ranged from "inadequate" to "pathetic."

Respondents stated that they used the local host-country market primarily for purchasing fruits and vegetables. Some concern was expressed over the sanitation of meat and the manner in which it is cut. Also high prices and non-availability of American brand names were mentioned as reasons for not using local stores.

#### C. Schools

Only a small percentage of Navymen interviewed had school age children. However, for the most part, all were critical of the American community school. They felt that their children were not receiving the quality education that they would get in the States and that there was very little administrative control over discipline.

#### D. Problems Encountered

As shown in Table 5, Greek driving habits and the inability to communicate were listed most frequently as the most difficult problems and adjustments that Navymen and their families deal with during their assignment to Greece. Locating suitable housing, dealing with landlords, irregular and unpredictable service in public utilities were also mentioned as problem areas by a large percentage of the Navymen completing the questionnaire. Descriptive examples of these major problem areas are presented following Table 5.

TABLE 5

PROBLEMS THAT AMERICANS  
ENCOUNTER IN ADJUSTING  
TO LIFE IN GREECE\*

Problem Areas	Percent of 28 Respondents**
Greek driving habits	46%
Communication barrier	40%
Housing and public utilities	25%
Unfamiliar social customs	18%
Siesta time	14%
Greek rudeness in public	8%
Other problems	14%

\*Question included in distributed questionnaire only.

\*\*Adds up to more than 100 percent because of multiple responses.

Greek Driving Habits - "Driving is a definite problem in Greece. Laws are not enforced and consequently the road is used as a theater for free form driving."

"The only people who heed the stop sign are the Americans. The only people who heed the center lines are the Americans."

"Driving conditions are extremely hazardous, due not only to the Greek public temperament, but also to the innumerable and unpredictable driving habits of the people. Greek vehicles and roads come in all sizes, shapes, conditions, and speeds that demand extreme caution."

"Driving in Greece is like driving in a destruction derby, it's only a matter of time before you get hit."

Communication Barrier - "Naturally, the language is the biggest thing that a family has to deal with. If you cannot speak the language, how can you communicate with the people?"

"It is very hard to get to know one's Greek neighbors if there is a language barrier. Americans are, for the most part, unwilling to learn Greek. No communication exists and this causes problems."

"The women feel very isolated for the first 6 months especially when they are unable to communicate with their Greek neighbors."

Housing and Public Utilities - "Greek housing is not what the average American is used to. Poor plumbing and inadequate building materials make housing a problem for American families."

"There is an irregularity in the availability of water and electricity. Water can be shut off for days and electricity or power failures are a common experience."

"There is no central heating and you must burn oil just to have hot water - there are a lot of problems with space heaters - they give off diesel fumes and you have to be careful with them. At times the water is turned off to conserve on it - then they turn the electricity off - they say because of repairs being made to the electrical equipment."

Unfamiliar Social Customs - "Values and the way of thinking are different and a new family may make early errors in dealing with the Greeks."

"Things are different here, Greeks have a custom of holding hands."

"The Greeks pamper their kids especially the male children and they are not disciplined."

"I have been asked to go to tavernas by my Greek neighbors but when I suggest that I bring my wife they do not understand this. It is not unusual for the Greek male to go many places, such as an evening at the taverna, without being accompanied by his wife."

Siesta Time - "I have found it hard to adjust to the complete stop in the afternoons. The children are required to remain indoors during the siesta because the Greeks demand complete quiet."

"Their hours of operation are strange - for example if you need something in the middle of the afternoon, you can't buy it because the stores are all closed during siesta."

Greek Rudeness in Public - "When in a public place Greeks are very rude people in contrast to the way they treat you in their homes. It isn't uncommon to be standing in a line to pay a bill and six or seven people try to crowd in by pushing and shoving."

"Greeks are very rude in public: pushing and staring are both common."

"They are pushy, no lines. They shout and yell at each other, although I don't think they take it too seriously."

Other Problems - "The negotiability of costs of housing, services, food, etc., must rank as one of the most unsettling elements of living in Greece for most Americans. The prices and costs of many essentials are variable (generally true in Europe); a procedure unfamiliar to Americans and one for which the American is at best ill-prepared or even totally unprepared. Since the American is usually confronted with this problem almost immediately on arrival, it appears to have a significant effect on his attitude throughout the tour of duty. Further, misunderstanding of the custom of bargaining for nearly everything can lead to an inadvertent but nonetheless offensive display of wealth in the eyes of the Greeks."

"Another difficult problem when interacting with Greeks is the rather complicated custom of exchanging gifts. Acceptance of a gift from a Greek (and, in their hospitableness, it is difficult not to) can lead to an obligation from the Greek viewpoint to reciprocate. The Greek may indicate he wants the American to obtain some prohibited article from the exchange or through the customs-free privileges. Refusal to do so may be considered offensive from the Greek viewpoint.

#### E. Adjustment Difficulties

Things that Greeks do that Americans have greatest difficulty adjusting to are summarized in Table 6. Greek driving, pushing and shoving in public, and taking siestas emerged as the most frequently mentioned difficulties for Americans to adjust to. These "things" were also listed in Table 5 as some of the most difficult problems that navy personnel encounter in Greece. Descriptive examples relating remaining "things" are presented below Table 6.

TABLE 6

THINGS THAT GREEKS DO THAT AMERICANS  
HAVE THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY  
ADJUSTING TO

Things	Percent of 82* Respondents
Drive aggressively	59%
Push and shove in public	21%
Take siestas	16%
Lack of concern for promptness	10%
Have a different price standard for Americans	10%
Different style of daily living	9%
Other	6%

\*Adds up to more than 100 percent because of multiple responses.

Lack a Concern for Promptness - "Greek people have an altogether different conception of time. In fact, they seem blithely unaware that it exists, while Americans seem supremely aware of its existence. A Greek will operate his shop, as the station barber does, until business or his energy slacks, and may close long before or after the usual closing hour; our American will watch the clock, busy or not, and leave precisely on the hour."

"In business dealings, an item left to be fixed and picked up at a later date may not be ready on that date. Greeks have no concept of time in this respect."

Have Different Price Standard for Americans - "Greeks think all Americans are rich."

"Greeks can often obtain the same product for a much lower price."

"They are always trying to get the sailors' money."

"Americans pay more because they don't know how or when to bargain."

Different Style of Daily Living - "The Greek daily time schedule, beginning early in the morning and ending late at night, troubles Americans. The Greek afternoon sleep, the heavy lunch and late dinner, and his seemingly less stressful work routine, despite its bursts of back breaking labor, are foreign to the American who has his eight hour day of work and few spare hours at home or of relaxation. Somehow, the American's afternoon coffee break cannot compare to the Greek's afternoon sleep."

". . . eating late in the evenings is awkward; most tavernas do not begin to serve food until 9:00 to 10:00."

"Greeks are opportunists who are veritable cut throats in business matters where they are legally allowed to bargain. But, after business, this same man who bargained so hard to make it better for himself will obligingly treat his business competitor to a cup of Turkish coffee and talk about everything but the deal at hand. At work in this situation is a dichotomy between the Greek's social and business life. This Americans cannot understand, especially when the Greek cannot take his business seriously during the afternoon siesta."

Other - "Greeks ask very penetrating and personal questions such as "how much money do you make." To an American such a question is viewed as socially inappropriate but to a Greek such questions are appropriate to ask of people one views as friends."

"The thing that bothered me most was the lack of personal privacy around Greeks. Like my landlord would walk into my house at any time and just walk through and look all around."

"The automobile has been in Greece for a short period of time and in small towns and rural areas the people are still accustomed to walking in the roadway, thus making driving very hazardous. In particular, the dark clothing worn by the older women and priests makes them extremely difficult to see at night."

F. Negative American Behaviors

Navy personnel were asked what "things" they thought Americans do that the Greek people have the greatest difficulty adjusting to. As shown in Table 7, lack of respect for social customs was mentioned by a third of the respondents. Acting superior, spending a lot of money, drinking too much and being disrespectful to the Greek people were also mentioned by a large number of Navymen as negative behaviors displayed by Americans. Examples of these adverse behaviors are presented following Table 7.

TABLE 7

THINGS THAT AMERICANS DO THAT GREEKS HAVE  
THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY ADJUSTING TO

Item	Percent of 82* Respondents
Lack respect for social customs	34%
Have a superior attitude	28%
Portray the "rich American" image	21%
Drink too much and become loud and unruly	18%
Disrespect for Greeks as individuals	12%

\*Adds up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Lack Respect for Social Customs - "Not observing carefully the 'siesta' period by the Americans, and the Greek's early morning (before 7 AM) and late evening (after 11 PM) noise making."

"The younger single people who drive motorcycles, the loud noise of the bikes, Greeks don't like excessive noise."

Have a Superior Attitude - "As a whole, the Americans look down on the Greek people because they often lack up-to-date American-style conveniences. Greeks resent this."

"Too many Americans consider that the 'American way' is far superior to any other. This type of American cannot seem to avoid making value judgments out loud on things Greek or European that do not concern him, and his comments are usually unwelcome."

"Somehow maybe through facial expression, we communicate to them that we think they are not smart or that Americans are somehow superior."

"Rich American" Image - "We are too free with our money and try to buy friendship which Greeks will accept in an immediate sense but reject overall."

"Showing off in public places by 'big spending' 'throwing money around'."

"Seeing young Americans with big cars."

"If you over-tip, Greeks interpret this as Americans flaunting their wealth."

Drink Too Much and Become Loud and Unruly - "American drinking is a very noticeable problem; Americans drink to get drunk, Greeks drink with the meal."

"The Greek people, men and women, drink a lot (wines mostly), but they eat as they drink and hold their liquor very well. It is a seldom sight to see an intoxicated Greek although there are a few exceptions. They do not join other's gatherings unless asked and do not roam the streets in loud groups as American servicemen do."

"Americans like to party - parties mean noise, etc. Of course, this can cause problems."

"Sailors going into town and getting noisy and boisterous and drinking too much bothers the Greeks. The Greeks drink also and sometimes get loud but they don't get unruly and violent."

"When Americans throw a party and invite only Americans, their Greek friends don't understand this. They want you to accept them and are upset if you don't."



Disrespect for Greeks as Individuals - "Unwillingness to socialize with Greek people."

"Call Greeks stupid and lazy."

"American suspicion of the Greek, engendered by a faulty understanding of a strange culture, must be one major irritant. But also, this suspicion seems to be reenforced by a certain unwillingness on the American's part to engage the Greek fully as a person. Language and customs stand in the way, of course, but the obvious lack of effort surely annoys the Greek. I spoke once with a well educated Greek who told me of some Americans who had a real knack for speaking Greek but who rarely did so. 'The trouble with them,' he said, 'is that they don't try to communicate socially with Greeks. I prefer those who have no knack but try.'"

"In a world of their own - their base-provided entertainment and own social activities, and their private unwillingness to share and learn - the Americans cannot help but annoy the Greeks with such clannishness."

### G. Desirable Personal Characteristics

Table 8 lists the kinds of desirable qualities mentioned by Navymen as the most critical personal characteristics to look for in selecting an individual/family for homeporting assignment. The quoted examples following the table are statements descriptive of successfully domiciled Navy personnel, that is, individuals/families who were seen as being at home in Greece and also seen as being accepted by the Greeks.

TABLE 8

QUALITIES DESIRABLE IN AMERICANS  
FOR POSITIVE INTERACTION WITH  
GREEK NATIONALS

Qualities	Percent of 82* Respondents
Friendliness, sincerity and outgoingness	29%
Interest in Greek culture	26%
Adaptability	24%
Maturity	21%
Family stability	20%
Even-tempered personality	17%
Language interest	13%
Flexibility	12%
Financial stability	7%
Greek ancestry	6%
Patience	2%

\*Adds up to more than 100 percent because of multiple responses.

Successful Navy Types - "They are generally willing to sacrifice certain kinds of privacy to greater extent than most Americans. They are also willing to accept the Greeks' ways of doing things."

"They seem to be people who are well-adjusted, have an open attitude toward change and new concepts, and are gregarious."

"They seem to be more willing to listen to the inevitable criticism of things-American without taking offense or giving rebuttal."

"These people are free-spirited, easy tempered, relate well with people, and take a genuine interest in Greece and its people."

"Instead of becoming isolated from the Greek people, they get out and mingle with them and make friends."

"Families who like to do a lot of things as a family work out well here."

"For the family group, the most important characteristic is a well developed sense of values and financial stability. It is also important that no one in the family have any severe emotional hangups - the ability to roll with the punch is of significant importance. For both the unaccompanied serviceman and for the family group, a mature and well-balanced outlook on life is important."

"They are open-minded, pioneering types who are willing to adjust to different ways of doing things to give up certain luxuries, and to take some interest in things beyond themselves."

"They make an effort to learn Greek."

#### H. Undesirable American Qualities

Traits or conditions mentioned as undesirable qualities of individuals/families assigned to Greece are listed in Table 9.

Although many of the traits/conditions are the reverse of the desirable qualities presented in Table 8, they do not assume corresponding ranks in terms of importance. For example, the desirable quality of patience is considered least necessary for positive social interaction; impatience, on the other hand, is clearly a primary factor in mediating against constructive social interaction.

TABLE 9

TRAITS OR CONDITIONS UNDESIRABLE FOR  
SATISFACTORY HOMEPORTING

Trait/Condition	Percent of 82 Respondents*
Impatient, intolerent	20%
Marital instability	15%
Heavy drinking	12%
Young, recently married	11%
Financial irresponsibility	9%
Narrow minded, prejudiced	9%
Lack of maturity	9%
Inability to adapt	9%
Families with teenagers	6%
Children needing special attention	6%
Drug users	6%
Loud and boisterous	5%
Lack of cultural empathy	4%
Negative attitude toward Navy	4%
Other	4%

\*Adds up to more than 100 percent because of multiple responses.

## I. Treatment of Americans

When giving their impressions of the type of treatment Americans received from the Greeks, the respondents' views reflected no clear-cut trend. They were about evenly divided on the question "Do you think American Military personnel are treated any differently from non-military Americans in Greece?" Fifty-eight percent indicated they saw no difference in treatment, while the remaining 42 percent stated that they felt that military and non-military Americans were indeed treated differently. Among the latter, about half felt that American military were treated better than non-military, and the other half felt they were treated worse.

Treated Differently - " . . . by both Greeks and Americans. Non-military Americans are judged by the Greeks on their individual qualities whereas the military personnel are often judged as a group. Non-military personnel are included in the general category "foreign community" whereas the U. S. military are looked on as a separate group. Both officially and unofficially, both Americans and the Greeks use this same categorization. The military man in Greece is considered transitory while the non-military American may become accepted as a permanent member of the community."

"For the most part the military are treated somewhat better. The American 'back pack' traveler, and the lavishly spending and often loudly demanding types of tourists are viewed as less desirable than the American military. I feel that we get better treatment than those types of Americans."

## J. Preparation for Homeporting Assignment

The majority of respondents indicated in their recommendations the need for more information before proceeding to an assigned homeport. A combined total of sixty-one percent of both face-to-face interviewees and questionnaire respondents felt that both general information about the host-country and its culture and customs, and specific factual particulars concerning housing and the dealings of everyday living, had definitely been lacking in their own preparation before going to Greece. Another sizeable group of twenty-four percent felt that training in spoken language should be provided for both service people and their families, and of these many felt that this type of pre-homeporting training should be required rather than wholly voluntary. Quoted statements of respondents, bearing on these recommendations, follow Table 10 below.

TABLE 10

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPORVING PREPARATION FOR HOMEPORTING IN GREECE

Recommendation	Percent of 82 Respondents
Provide more general orientation in lectures and pamphlets about differences in social customs, background culture, and local regulations and laws	33%
Provide specific, up-to-date information about what to bring, house hunting, housing standards, rental expectations, shopping for big ticket items and bargaining	28%
Provide and require language training	24%
Provide information and driver training instruction on safe driving in Greek traffic	7%
----- Miscellaneous	8%

"Tell the truth about duty in Greece. It is, in fact, a country of people much like America but about twenty years behind in modern conveniences. Customs, foods, cultural points, etc., are already well advertised and described. The 'crazy Greek driver' should be clearly described. The problems of heating, electricity, water utilities in general, should be well addressed. The less well laid out roads need to be described as well as the modern highways. The rudeness of the Greek is just as important as the friendliness of the Greeks. The hordes of flies and mosquitoes are just as much a part of Greece as the lovely landscape and flowers and the delicious fruits and vegetables. The high cost of nearly everything except food on the Greek market is important. The difficulty in obtaining quality repairs on an automobile ranks equally important. The language problem is significant and little if any official assistance is provided. The fact that the burden of being a good 'ambassador' is almost totally on the individual with little, if any, help from the other side, is important. Red tape is as much a way of life as visiting the ancient ruins. Traffic jams are frequently encountered and traffic accidents are experienced far more often than the trips to the Acropolis. To prepare for a tour of duty in Greece in a satisfactory manner, the American should have advanced information presented with maturity and honesty."

"Provide assistance in obtaining housing. An officially employed Greek and English speaking person experienced in real estate matters could render valuable assistance to the newcomer. The present practice of working through a Greek realtor with no official assistance places the American at a great disadvantage. Usually the landlord can speak no English and the American, no Greek. The realtor acts as a translator - and he is employed by the landlord. A housing assistance person could direct the newcomer to available housing of reliable realtors, and once assist with the leasing arrangements. Qualified assistance in bargaining for housing would significantly reduce these costs and the inflationary impact of the American presence. Such assistance could result in the leveling off of the increasing housing costs and consequently, increases in the supplementary housing allowances. Similar plans are in effect in Naples and Rota."

"Conduct courses in conversational Greek language as part of the indoctrination program - on the ships and stations as well as in a centrally located area for the dependents. A viable program would include mandatory participation by the military person and an actively encouraged program for the dependents, younger children as well as older children and adults. The dependent's program should have a provision for child care, be easily accessible, and be convenient to some shopping area (to permit combined trips). A few minutes of observations on Greek laws and customs should be included in each lesson."

"You cannot really understand a situation until you have lived in it."

## CONCLUSIONS

Personal attributes and personal/family conditions associated with notably successful and critically poor adjustment to living and working in Greece were isolated. The more prominent positive qualities of American Navy people who functioned well in Greece were: an interest in language and cultural matters, friendliness, adaptability, family stability, maturity, even-tempered personality, and flexibility. The qualities associated with especially poor adjustment in Greece were more singular in nature in that even one of these could constitute an almost insurmountable handicap in attempting to make a satisfactory adjustment to living in Greece. Some examples are: impatience, intolerance - including the "everything American is the best" attitude, marital instability, and heavy drinking accompanied by aggressive behavior.

Many of the problems recounted by the Navymen could be minimized if they had a better understanding of the Greek social customs and daily living pattern, and had at least a few words and phrases of Greek with which to communicate with host-country nationals.

Providing more information about Greek culture, living conditions, etc., is relatively simple through brochures, pamphlets and lectures. However, information alone has proven less than adequate in preparing people for actually living under on-site overseas conditions. Mere description must be supplemented by some means of giving the person an opportunity to experience prototypical overseas conditions beforehand, so he gains some feel not only for the facts of the situation but also a feel for his own participation in and reactions to it. For example, bargaining over price in Greece is their way of life and Navy personnel stationed there are well aware of this. However, bargaining is an unfamiliar practice to most Americans; consequently, they have little feel for when and how to bargain and often do it ineptly when they try. In addition they may pay more for merchandise than they need to, or may incur the Greek's disfavor by attempting to bargain for things that the Greeks themselves do not bargain for.

Rather than provide the traditional method of simply furnishing information, a different approach to cultural indoctrination and training is needed. It appears desirable to provide Navymen and their families with some situational experience prior to their actually being confronted



with the real overseas situation. Such experience should be offered in indoctrination and training sessions which would simulate various representative and frequently encountered conditions in the trainees' prospective overseas location. In addition, the participant would also be exposed to, and would use, enough of the basic day-to-day host-country spoken language to enable him to communicate with minimum adequacy in his interactions with host-country nationals.

The simulation experience, aside from its educational aspect, simultaneously brings each participant some knowledge of his own probable reactions and of the likelihood that he can successfully cope with a given overseas situation. Where the person's self-generated feedback indicate difficulty in dealing with significant, or many, of the more common host-country situations, he may elect to self-select himself out of the program. This is particularly true and important for the Navyman's dependents who will be living, day in and day out, in close and constant contact with the host-country environment.

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